APROVED

by the decision No 20 of 13 February 2017

of the Council for the Judiciary

**Strategy of the Council for the Judiciary**

**2017–2019**

**Introduction**

* Section 891 of the Law "On Judicial Power" provides that the Council for the Judiciary participates in developing the policy and strategy of judicial system, as well as in improving the work organization of the judicial system. Therefore, the strategy of the Council for the Judiciary shall be developed linking it to the judicial system. In its turn, the obligation of the state stipulated in Section 502,part II of the Law to envisage adequate funding and logistical support for courts shall also apply to ensuring the operation of the Council for the Judiciary.
* When establishing the institution, the legislator's obligation is to provide the funding that enables the institution to effectively fulfill its functions specified by law and to provide that exercise of its competence is not restricted because of scarce resources;
* Development planning process is elaboration of principles, objectives and activities required to achieve such objectives in order to implement certain political priorities;
* The Council for the Judiciary deems it necessary to expand and clarify the references to development of judiciary contained in the priorities stated in the Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia and the National Development Plan of Latvia for 2014 – 2020, by linking the accomplishing of determined aims and objectives also with the process of judiciary budget planning;
* The Council for the Judiciary also takes into account the proposals expressed in the report of Commission for Legal Environment Improvement "On improvement of the work of the Council for the Judiciary" (on functions of the Council for the Judiciary, its composition, and possibilities to improve its operation and increase efficiency).
* Council for the Judiciary reminds that the Constitutional Court has pointed to the role of the Council for the Judiciary in strengthening the democracy and operation of the state governed by the rule of law, as well as in ensuring the right to a fair trial, at the same time indicating the most efficient way to fulfill this objective;
* For implementation of set objectives the Council for the Judiciary is required to cooperate with the Legal Affairs Committee of the Parliament, the Ministry of Justice and the Court Administration, as well as with professional organizations of legal practitioners;
* All further aims and objectives set for their implementation are interrelated and progress made in implementing each of them gives positive impact on the fulfillment of the rest of the tasks and objectives. In order to achieve the effective implementation of set aims, the objectives included in the strategy may be clarified during the course of implementation.

**Aims and objectives**

1. **Strengthening the independence of the judiciary**

In order to achieve this aim, the following main activities and objectives are set:

* Participating in the judicial policy-making and in developing of regulatory framework regarding issues that directly affect the functioning of the judicial system:
* Initiating and encouraging the necessary changes and improvements in the legislation that regulates the functioning of the judicial system;
* Participating in the legislative process.
* Improving the functionality of operation of the Council for the Judiciary to facilitate its ability to effectively exercise functions assigned to it by the law "On Judicial Power" and carry out its obligations, in particular:
* Extending the powers in appointment and career progression of judges;
* Participating in the independent judiciary budget planning, defense and administration;
* Improving and specifying the composition of the Council for the Judiciary;
* Improving the work organization of the Council for the Judiciary;
* Developing the international cooperation by active participation in the work of the European Network of Councils for the Judiciary and regularly evaluating the experience of European Union countries in enhancement the operation of the judicial systems.

1. **Efficient judiciary**

In order to achieve this objective, the Council for the Judiciary focuses on fulfilling the following tasks as a priority:

* Evaluating the efficiency of work of the judicial system and developing methods to increase such efficiency:
* Analyzing the progress of courthouse reform and its impact on the functioning of the judicial system;
* Evaluating time-limits of proceedings and adequacy of resources for litigation processes.

1. **Public confidence in the judiciary**

In order to ensure a positive development of public awareness of the judiciary and of public the confidence in the judiciary, the Council for the Judiciary lays down the following main objectives:

* Improving the communication of the judicial system:
* Promoting the fulfillment of communication strategy objectives of judicial system and observing the uniform communication principles in judicial institutions;
* Carrying out regular assessment of public confidence in the judiciary and attitude towards the judicial system and judicial work.